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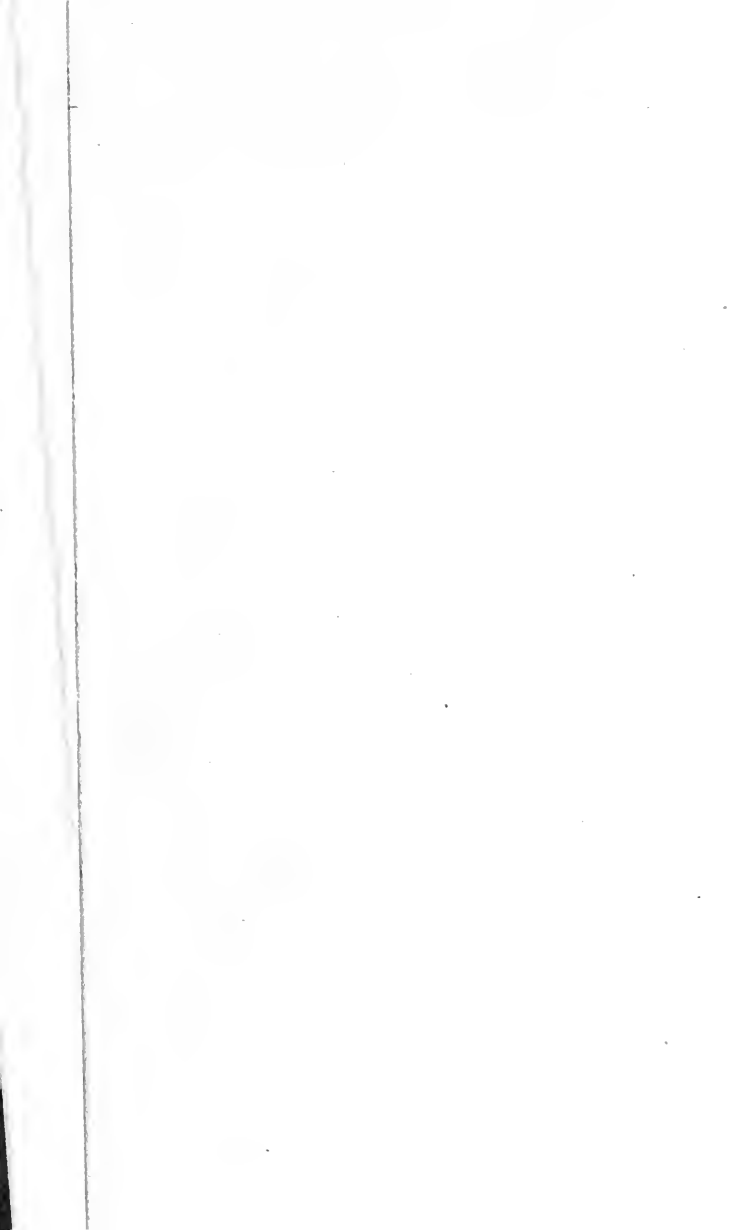


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J. G. Croft

A
VISIT TO NORWICH,
A POEM,
IN TWO CANTOS.

BY
JAMES LAMB.

*“Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deem'd,—
—or to describe Races and Games,—
Me of these, nor skill'd, nor studious.”*

MILTON.

NORWICH,

Printed, for the Author, by N. Stewardson.

1820

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A
VISIT TO NORWICH,

Canto 1st.

ARGUMENT.

*Critics deprecated,—City in sight,—Retrospection,
The Castle,—City Gaol,—Norfolk and Norwich
Hospital,—Market-place,—Home and Relations,—
Night.*

WHILE diff'rent politics mankind controul,
And state affairs disturb each busy soul,
While party rage unjustly feigns to see,
Each in the other great disloyalty,
My theme is NORWICH, scene of earlier days,
To thee I will address my vocal lays,

Spare me ye *Critics* while I aim t'impart,
The warm effusions of an honest heart,
No pompous learning does to me belong,
Simplicity alone must guide my song:
No heathen deity my verse shall name,
Tis Heav'n's kind aid with reverence I claim.

Hail, NORWICH hail! Oh, venerated spot!
Ne'er be my gratitude to thee forgot,
Thou gav'st me, boast my muse,, tho' humble birth,
Yet honest parents, and I prize their worth,
They fondly shared their hard-earn'd crust with me,
And taught me lessons of morality;
A sight more pleasing cannot greet my eyes,
Transporting sight! to see thy spires arise;
Near thirty miles I've walk'd this sultry day,
With heart elate, nor weary with the way,
For soon I clasp my parents to my breast,
Enraptur'd view them and a welcome guest.

Those winding walks record it, O my song,
My infant feet have often trod among,
Ah, happy hours! no cares disturb'd my breast,
Nor dreams disquiet robb'd me of my rest,

Nor pain did then my guileless breast assail,
But free as air I rov'd through wood and vale,
Blythe as the morn with sprightly glee I sang,
And rosy health from my exertion sprang!

But soft! what dreary building's that on high,
Which chills the captive crim'nal to descry,
Who haply urg'd by stern misfortune's hand,
To stop his neighbour and his wealth demand?
The County Gaol, tremendous name to hear,
And soon, too soon, its pond'rous gates appear,
He enters them, and in a gloomy cell,
Till day of trial comes is doom'd to dwell;
There the fell murd'rer gives the sigh sincere,
And for the unrecalled stab, a tear,
Pale child of sorrow! I no more can speak,
Soft pity's tear flows fast adown my cheek:
Yet ere I close, I'll make one slight essay,
To you whose hearts compassion kind, can sway,
View our *own wretched city prison*, where
A jail deliv'ry's known but once a year,
Combine your powers, this monstrous evil cure,
Think what correction guiltless souls endure!

6. *Norfolk and Norwich Hospital—Market-place.*

But see yon *hospitable, sweet* abode,
Which seems to terminate the London road;
Oh blest asylum of the wretched maim'd,
How oft hast thou a wife's best blessing claim'd,
The dearest relatives of life in turn,
Thy goodness, excellence, and worth must learn;
NORWICH! how glows my heart with joy divine,
When I beheld this lovely dome of thine:
How many beings but for thee would lie,
With broken limb and no Physician by:—
Like as the cripple at Bethesda pool,
Touch'd by his heavenly Savior was made whole,
So here does human aid exert its power,
To health each suff'ring mortal to restore!

The spacious market-place my way lies through,
From Briggs's lane it opens to my view,
Hail, panniers, stalls, men, women, young and old,
Whose mutton, veal, and beef remain unsold:
Oh plenteous market! thou'rt our boast and pride,
From thee each table might be well supplied!

Now for my friends, and see, extended wide,
The door where health, and calm content preside,

Home and Relations—Night.

My Father, Mother, Brothers, Sisters, come,
Thus let me clasp ye, each cries "*welcome home*",
Round goes the nut-brown ale, the harmless jest,
The song, till pleasure yields to needful rest,
The day is spent and far advanc'd the night,
And solemn darkness now succeeds the light,
Kind heav'n refresh me with a calm repose,
With balmy sleep my heavy eye-lids close.

Oh God! who form'd acute the human heart,
To feel delight or misery's keen smart,
Thou awful God, thou only one o'er Kings,
For all th'endearing joys this VISIT brings,
To us poor mortals let us speak thy fame,
In pious praises to thy mighty name;
Yet, Oh what speech can thy vast powers express,
My heart shall muse them and thy mercies bless!

End of the first Canto.

Morning.

VISIT TO NORWICH,

Canto 2nd.

ARGUMENT.

Morning,—Rustic Lovers,—The Ploughman,—Thorpe.—Bakers' Horns,—The Weaver;—Cow-Cross, (a Tale.)—Octagon Chapel,—Ranelagh Gardens.—Conclusion.

NOW Sol's bright rays adorn the orient sky,
And the sweet Lark does chaunt its minstrelsy,
Ye sluggards waste not the delightful hours,
Awake, arise, exert your noble powers!
To hear the warbling birds at earliest morn,
Tuning their praises with the opening dawn,
Delight my soul and lift it up to heaven,
To the Creator for his blessings given!

Rustic Lovers—Thorpe.

Now let me wander Thorp's delightful vale,
Where the fond Rustic tells his love-sick tale,
The list'ning maid relieves his pleasing pain,
And places confidence, which prove not vain :
In her chaste breast an ardent passion glows,
And upon *Him* her *all*, her *heart* bestows,
They wed,—oh say whose peaceful, happy lot,
Can vie with those within the clay built cot?
Norwich coarse druggot does his jerkin make,
(A dress how different to the city rake ;)
The swain for nought beyond his home will ask,
But day by day pursues his rustic task,
He ploughs the field, or mends the fence to keep,
From breaking forth the truant wand'ring sheep ;
The cheerful sun which rouses him to toil
The live-long day upon the fertile soil,
Will at his setting in the silent eve,
Bid him give o'er for rest—his labour leave,
Possess of roseate health, best boon of life,
Blest with his humble fare, his home and wife !
When in th' unwholesome City I've been pent,
And of the common sewers inhal'd the scent,

How sweet, how lovely is each rural view,
“For ever seen and yet for ever new;—”
The winding river which to Yarmouth leads,
The cattle grazing on the verdant meads,
The rustic Farm seen thro’ the shady trees,
The freighted Keel mov’d by the pleasant breeze,
The patient Fisherman beside the rill,
Watching the motion of his floating quill,
With expectation big, and eager eyes,
To catch and drag ashore his scaly prize :
Here too each city youth and sprightly lass;
In the gay sailing boats are seen to pass,
Adown sweet Wensum’s stream on pleasure’s wing,
Making with joy the fruitful vale to ring,
Wafted by gentle gales they skim along,
To Whitlingham; to join the festive throng !
All, all combine to charm the wandering eye,
Ah, surely Thiorpe, no spot with thee can vie,
Hail, lovely vale, bedeck’d with many a flower,
To view thy scenes how cheerful glides the hour !
Back to the City now I speed my way,
By the bright sun how far advanc’d the day,

Hark to the horns! harmonious sounds to hear,
The Bakers' horns proclaim the breakfast near,
Yet ah, those sounds which give the hungry joy,
Must the sick mortal's sweet repose annoy!

Attend the song the merry weaver sings,
While he from side to side the shuttle flings,
Forget not, O my muse his praise to name,
Let him some notice in your VISIT claim,
How well his pliant limbs to ditties move,
Whether to martial strains, or tender love!
His dress, a soldier's jacket, small cock'd hat,
A pipe in mouth, a checker'd clean cravat,
A dowlass apron, slip-shoes on the feet,
Will form a *Norwich Weaver* most complete;
Honest, and blunt, and hospitably kind,
He'll treat his friend while he can raise the wind,
And oft, too oft neglects the strength'ning prog,
Lur'd by the spark'ling glass of *Tompson's Nog*!

But turn me now into the northern ward,
Saint George's parish claims my next regard,—
Here liv'd a dame of excellent report,
And at whose house the pious did resort,

Kind heav'n had her with one sweet daughter blest,
 Who was with ev'ry lovely charm possest,
 A maid accomplish'd—heav'nly was her face,
 Her manners mild, adorn'd with ev'ry grace:
 At others woes her bosom soft, wou'd move,
 To sympathizing offices of love!
 The gentle dame to whom she was most dear,
 Saw her bright virtues growing with each year,—
 Edward of Coslany fair Jane beheld,
 And his whole soul with virtuous love was fill'd,
 He woo'd, and soon a mutual flame was own'd,
 Soon love's responses in each breast were found,
 For lovers' eyes the glances will betray,
 Of meanings soft the fault'ring tongue wou'd say,
 The Dame beheld them, and with joy consented,
 In wedlock's band's the pair to be cemented,
 The youth delighted thus to gain the fair,
 Most sweetly sang the following simple air:

WHEN morning's light begins to dawn,
 And birds are chaunting each a ditty,
 I rise, and wander quite forlorn,
 To muse on Jane of Norwich City.

This bosom now its pangs shall cease,
My voice shall tune each sprightly ditty,
My efforts all shall aim to please,
Jane, peerless maid of Norwich City.

This heart shall glow with endless love,
Since Jane her Edward deigns to pity,
My lovely bride, my faith shall prove,
Thou, matchless maid of Norwich City.

But say my muse, what dire event could blast,
The wish'd-for union which approach'd so fast?
Death prematurely snatch'd her from his arms,
And pale and cold were laid her lovely charms,
In evil hour it was her fate to meet,
A Cow, which thrust her down in Calvert Street,
Th'affrighted beast did trample her upon,
And thus ere noon was set Jane's morning sun!

Young Edward mov'd by grief and heartfelt pain,
Thus o'er her corse pour'd forth his lurid strain:
"And art thou gone, and hath relentless death,
"Depriv'd my lovely, lovely Jane of breath?
"Unhappy me! so early doom'd to prove,
"The cruel pangs of disappointed love!

“By her my bosom first was taught to glow,
 “With virtuous love, and all its raptures know,
 “How have I long’d to see that morning shine,
 “When pure, and holy rites wou’d make her mine;
 “Long hath this heart with *her* desir’d to prove,
 “The chaste endearments of connubial love,
 “But she’s no more—my scalding tears break forth,
 “Sad mourners! telling what I once was worth,
 “Forbear fond sighs, ah foolish tears give o’er,
 “Call not to mind what vainly ye deplore!”

But who can speak the afflictive pain, the youth,
 Felt for his *Jaue*, that form of spotless truth?
 Long did he weep, for oh, how great his loss,
 Since which the fatal *spot is call’d Cow Cross* : *
 An humble Tablet did the fact record,
 Which late’s remov’d, and ought to be restor’d.

Enough of this sad tale, I’ll hence away,
 And see, yon sacred Temple claims my lay,
 There I my earliest childhood’s sabbaths past,
 And grateful to’t will be, while life shall last,

* The intermediate space between the Golden Dog Lane, and the Rifle-man,——*St. Georges.*

Hail hallow'd dome! where oft my infant voice,
Did to Jehovah in sweet songs rejoice :
Soon as each blest and solemn morn return'd,
My artless breast for pious duties burn'd,
There pleas'd in humble prayer and praise to join,
And hear the Preacher's eloquence divine,
My soul directed to the heav'nly road
By pure devotion to the one true God!

What theme shall next employ my humble muse,
Say what more charming subject can I chuse,
Than Ranelagh, where industry and art,
To classic minds a pleasure sweet impart;
Here oft within this "happy rural seat,"
Labour can find a calm and blest retreat;
The walks, the bowling-green, alike can charm,
The placid bosom, free from guilt's alarm,
Or if to pipe and glass you more incline,
What friends like NORWICH friends so sweet combine?
Here various pleasures the free mind engage,
Yon gay Rotundo furnishes a stage,
The sister arts, music and painting meet,
To make the lively Pantomime complete,

Equestrian feats beholding, we admire,
With dancers light, upon the rope, and wire ;
A Concert now, th' enchanting glee and song,
With instruments, the mirthful hours prolong,
In ev'ry face approving smiles appear,
Hail, Ranelagh! thy scenes my heart can cheer.

Oh, moments sweet! how swift ye flee away,
My time's elaps'd no longer can I stay,
Why does my breast the rising sigh impell?
Why dreads my heart that touching word "farewell?"
The fear, that haply this short VISIT o'er,
We meet in this uncertain life no more:—
Yet wherefore fear?
For though in death, in dust this form will lie,
My spirit will ascend above the sky,
Which makes the bitters of this life seem sweet,
Oh, g'orious thought! that we in heav'n shall meet,
Where 'twill be prov'd that *here* we have no home,
But look with lively faith for one to come!

End of the second Canto.

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